

L Number	Hits	Search Text	DB	Time stamp
1	75	determine with (polish\$3 adj rate) and semiconductor	USPAT; US-PGPUB	2002/12/18 16:54
2	59	(determine with (polish\$3 adj rate) and semiconductor) and planariz\$5 and thickness	USPAT; US-PGPUB	2002/12/18 16:55
3	30	determine with (polish\$3 adj time) and semiconductor	USPAT; US-PGPUB	2002/12/18 16:55
4	22	(determine with (polish\$3 adj time) and semiconductor) and planariz\$5 and thickness	USPAT; US-PGPUB	2002/12/18 16:55
5	12	((determine with (polish\$3 adj time) and semiconductor) and planariz\$5 and thickness) not ((determine with (polish\$3 adj rate) and semiconductor) and planariz\$5 and thickness)	USPAT; US-PGPUB	2002/12/18 16:55

	Title	Current OR	Current XRef
1	Method and apparatus for monitoring polishing state, polishing device, process wafer, semiconductor device, and method of manufacturing semiconductor device	451/6	
2	Endpoint detector and method for measuring a change in wafer thickness in chemical-mechanical polishing of semiconductor wafers and other microelectronic substrates	356/630	
3	Polishing body, polishing apparatus, polishing apparatus adjustment method, polished film thickness or polishing endpoint measurement method, and semiconductor device manufacturing method	451/6	
4	Method and apparatus for controlled polishing	451/5	451/287; 451/8
5	System for real-time control of semiconductor wafer polishing	451/10	451/11; 451/285; 451/41
6	System and method for predicting software models using material-centric process instrumentation	700/45	
7	Forming a transparent window in a polishing pad for a chemical mehcanical polishing apparatus	451/527	451/533; 451/550
8 X	System for real-time control of semiconductor wafer polishing	451/5	451/36; 451/8
9 X	System for real-time control of semiconductor wafer polishing	451/5	451/288; 451/8
10 X	System for real-time control of semiconductor wafer polishing	451/7	451/10; 451/41; 451/53; 451/9
11 X	System for real-time control of semiconductor wafer polishing	451/5	451/7; 451/8; 451/9

	Title	Current OR	Current XRef
12	Polishing body, polishing apparatus, polishing apparatus adjustment method, polished film thickness or polishing endpoint measurement method, and semiconductor device manufacturing method	451/6	451/287; 451/41; 451/526
13	Planarizing machines and alignment systems for mechanical and/or chemical-mechanical planarization of microelectronic substrates	451/6	451/10; 451/288; 451/296; 451/307; 451/41; 451/8; 451/9
14	System for real-time control of semiconductor wafer polishing	451/5	451/10; 451/287; 451/288; 451/6; 451/8
15	System for real-time control of semiconductor wafer polishing	451/7	451/288; 451/289; 451/8
16	Endpoint detector and method for measuring a change in wafer thickness	356/630	
17	Method and apparatus for controlling within-wafer uniformity in chemical mechanical polishing	451/10	451/11; 451/285; 451/287; 451/41; 451/54; 451/63
18	Real-time control of chemical-mechanical polishing processes using a shaft distortion measurement	451/6	451/2; 451/285; 451/287; 451/288; 451/5; 451/8
19	System for real-time control of semiconductor wafer polishing	451/5	451/10; 451/287; 451/288; 451/6; 451/8
20	Endpoint detector and method for measuring a change in wafer thickness in chemical-mechanical polishing of semiconductor wafers and other microelectronic substrates	356/630	438/16

	Title	Current OR	Current XRef
21	Apparatus and method for in-situ monitoring of chemical mechanical polishing operations	451/6	451/285
22	Polishing apparatus and method for planarizing layer on a semiconductor wafer	156/345.13	451/287
23	System for real-time control of semiconductor wafer polishing	451/5	451/288; 451/289; 451/6; 451/7; 451/8; 451/9
24	Method and apparatus for determining endpoint during a polishing process	451/8	451/41

	U	1 [1]	Document ID	Issue Date	Pages
1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	US 20020127951 A1	20020912	26
2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	US 20020071128 A1	20020613	18
3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	US 20020042243 A1	20020411	46
4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	US 20020037681 A1	20020328	25
5	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	US 20010041501 A1	20011115	26
6	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	US 20010039462 A1	20011108	28
7	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	US 20010036805 A1	20011101	33
8	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	US 20010016466 A1	20010823	26
9	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	US 20010001755 A1	20010524	26
10	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	US 6464564 B2	20021015	25
11	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	US 6464560 B2	20021015	26

	U	1 [1]	Document ID	Issue Date	Pages
12	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	US 6458014 B1	20021001	44
13	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	US 6447369 B1	20020910	24
14	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	US 6338667 B1	20020115	27
15	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	US 6306009 B1	20011023	26
16	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	US 6301006 B1	20011009	17
17	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	US 6276989 B1	20010821	16
18	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	US 6213846 B1	20010410	9
19	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	US 6120347 A	20000919	27
20	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	US 6075606 A	20000613	14

	U	1 [1]	Document ID	Issue Date	Pages
21	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	US 5964643 A	19991012	33
22	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	US 5948205 A	19990907	66
23	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	US 5851135 A	19981222	27
24	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	US 5830041 A	19981103	8

	Retrieval Classif	Inventor	S	C	P	2	3	4	5
1		Ishikawa, Akira et al.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2		Doan, Trung T.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3		Ihsikawa, Akira et al.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4		Gitis, Norm et al.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5		Sandhu, Gurtej S. et al.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6		Mendez, Rafael et al.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7		Birang, Manoocher M.B. et al.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8		Sandhu, Gurtej S. et al.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9		Sandhu, Gurtej S. et al.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10		Sandhu, Gurtej S. et al.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11		Sandhu, Gurtej S. et al.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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12		Ihsikawa, Akira et al.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13		Moore, Scott E.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14		Sandhu, Gurtej S. et al.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15		Sandhu, Gurtej S. et al.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16		Doan, Trung T.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17		Campbell, W. Jarrett et al.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18		Li, Leping et al.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19		Sandhu, Gurtej S. et al.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20		Doan, Trung T.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Retrieval Classif	Inventor	S	C	P	2	3	4	5
21		Birang, Manoocher et al.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22		Kodera, Masako et al.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23		Sandhu, Gurtej S. et al.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24		Takahashi, Tamami et al.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

DOCUMENT-IDENTIFIER: US 20010041501 A1

TITLE: System for real-time control of semiconductor wafer polishing

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[0009] A compounding problem associated with polishing semiconductor wafers is the inability to monitor polishing conditions in a effort to detect and correct the above inherent polishing problems as they occur. It is common to conduct numerous pre-polishing measurements of the wafer before commencement of the polishing process, and then conduct numerous similar post-polishing measurements to determine whether the polishing process yielded the desired topography, thickness, and uniformity. However, these pre- and post-polishing measurements are labor intensive and result in a low product throughput.

[0036] In another aspect of the invention, a system for polishing a semiconductor wafer comprises a wafer polishing assembly for polishing a face of a semiconductor wafer at a polishing rate and a polishing uniformity, the wafer polishing assembly including a platen rotatable about a first axis, a polishing head which supports the semiconductor wafer for rotation about a second axis, and a polishing head displacement mechanism which moves the polishing head and wafer across the platen, the wafer polishing assembly having a plurality of controllable operational parameters that upon variation change the polishing rate and polishing uniformity; a controller operably coupled to the wafer polishing assembly for monitoring and managing in

situ at least one of the operational parameters of the wafer polishing assembly; a processor operably coupled to the controller for determining a set of desired operational parameters based on the monitored operational parameters and outputting control information indicative of the desired operational parameters to the controller, the controller adjusting in situ at least one of the operational parameters of the wafer polishing assembly in response to the control information from the processor to effectuate a new polishing rate and a new polishing uniformity as the wafer polishing assembly continues to polish the face of the semiconductor wafer; and a detector operating on the wafer and communicating with the processor to determine whether polishing of the wafer is complete.

[0050] Wafer polishing assembly 12 has a film thickness measurement device 60 for measuring topography of the wafer face during polishing. Film thickness measurement device 60 is preferably implemented in the form of a laser interferometer measuring apparatus which employs interference of light waves for purposes of measurement. The laser interferometer measuring apparatus includes light transmitter/receiver units 62 provided at the surface of the platen subassembly 16 which transmit light at the wafer face and collect reflections therefrom. The laser apparatus also includes laser source and controller 64 which is optically coupled to units 62. The laser apparatus is configured to measure thicknesses and contour of films and materials on the wafer face. Apart from the laser apparatus, this invention also contemplates other techniques and systems that can be used as a film thickness measurement device including a system for measuring capacitance change

during wafer polishing, a device for detecting friction change at the wafer surface, and an acoustic mechanism for measuring wave propagation as films and layers are removed during polishing.

[0055] Controller 72 is connected to slurry supply means 50 via connector 79 to monitor and adjust slurry composition and flow rate. Controller 72 is coupled to temperature sensor 90 via connector 78 to receive feedback information concerning temperature of the polishing environment and wafer surface. Connector 81 conveys control signals and feedback information between controller 72 and film thickness measurement device 60.

[0057] Controller 72 works in conjunction with film thickness measurement device 60 to determine the polishing rates and uniformity across the wafer during real-time evaluations. This information is passed to processor 74 which then generates a map indicative of the polish rates and/or uniformity across the semiconductor wafer face for use in adjusting system operational parameters. Preferably, this map is generated on a periodic basis. In one embodiment, such mapping is performed using the techniques disclosed in U.S. Pat. No. 5,196,353, issued to Sandhu et al., assigned to the assignee of the present invention, and incorporated herein by reference. The technique disclosed in U.S. Pat. No. 5,196,353 involves using an infrared camera to detect infrared waves emitted from a wafer and correlating this information to the heat of various points on the wafer. Using this arrangement, the relative temperature at any point on the wafer is detected and mapped, and an infrared image of the surface of the wafer is developed.

[0063] More particularly, in the illustrated embodiment, the means for directing acoustic waves at the wafer comprises an acoustic wave transducer 302 connected to the controller 72 (and thus to the processor 74) via line 306, and the means for receiving reflected acoustic waves comprises an acoustic wave receiver 304 mounted to receive acoustic waves reflected from the wafer and connected to the controller 72 (and thus to the processor 74) via line 308. The transducer 302 converts an applied electrical voltage into a mechanical strain producing an acoustical wave. In one embodiment, the transducer 302 comprises a piezoelectric transducer, such as a thin film transducer, that converts a voltage into an acoustical wave. Similarly, in one embodiment, the receiver 304 comprises a piezoelectric receiver, such as a thin film receiver, that converts a reflected acoustic wave into a voltage. In the illustrated embodiment, the acoustic waves are directed at the backside of the wafer. In an alternative embodiment (not shown), the waves are directed at the front of the wafer by causing the polishing head displacement mechanism 76 to move the wafer to a location where an acoustic transducer and receiver can act on the front of the wafer. This is, for example, off the platen or at predetermined location on the platen where the transducer and receiver are located. The **thickness** of the wafer and the oxide layer on the wafer is determined by the processor 74 which analyzes the acoustic wave that is sent by the transducer 302 and the acoustic wave that is received by the receiver 304. More particularly, **thickness** is determined from the round trip time interval between the launch of an acoustical wave by the transducer 302 and the reception of the reflected wave by the receiver 304, and the speed of the

acoustic waves through
the layers of the wafer.

[0064] The amplitude as well as round trip time of the acoustic waves will change after a film has been completely removed and a different film layer has been contacted. An end point that corresponds to the interfaces of a different film of multiple layers of stacked films can be detected, as well as the end point of an oxide layer. In one embodiment, the planarization of a film is measured in real time by measuring a film thickness at several locations on the wafer.

US-PAT-NO: 6276989

DOCUMENT-IDENTIFIER: US 6276989 B1

TITLE: Method and apparatus for controlling within-wafer
uniformity in
chemical mechanical polishing

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Chemical mechanical polishing (CMP) is a widely used means of planarizing silicon dioxide as well as other types of layers on semiconductor wafers. Chemical mechanical polishing typically utilizes an abrasive slurry disbursed in an alkaline or acidic solution to planarize the surface of the wafer through a combination of mechanical and chemical action. Generally, a chemical mechanical polishing tool includes a polishing device positioned above a rotatable circular platen or table on which a polishing pad is mounted. The polishing device may include one or more rotating carrier heads to which wafers may be secured, typically through the use of vacuum pressure. In use, the platen may be rotated and an abrasive slurry may be disbursed onto the polishing pad. Once the slurry has been applied to the polishing pad, a downward force may be applied to each rotating carrier head to press the attached wafer against the polishing pad. As the wafer is pressed against the polishing pad, the surface of the wafer is mechanically and chemically polished.

As semiconductor devices are scaled down, the importance of chemical mechanical polishing to the fabrication process increases. In

particular, it becomes increasingly important to control and minimize within-wafer topography variations. For example, in one embodiment, to minimize spatial variations in downstream photolithography and etch processes, it is necessary for the oxide thickness of a wafer to be as uniform as possible (i. e., it is desirable for the surface of the wafer to be as planar as possible.)

Referring to FIG. 3, the center-to-edge radial polish rate profile for a batch of five wafers is shown. It is contemplated that the pre-polish and post-polish thickness of the polished layer may be measured at a plurality of radial positions along the wafer. Once measured, the polish rate at these radial positions may be determined by comparing the post-polish and pre-polish measurements and both quadratic and linear polynomials may be fit to the polish rate profile. In one embodiment, the state of the polishing tool 20 (e.g., center-fast, center-slow, etc.) may be characterized by the slope of the linear curve fit (ie., polish rate slope.) For example, a positive slope of the radial polish rate profile indicates center-slow polishing while a negative slope indicates center-fast polishing.

An input variable of the polishing tool 20 may be selected that has a strong and predictable impact on the controlled variable, (e.g., polish rate slope.) Moreover, it is important that manipulation of the selected input variable not significantly impact the mean polish rate (i.e., the input variable must control surface non-uniformity of the wafer without substantially affecting the mean thickness of the polished layer.) In one embodiment, the input variable is the oscillation length of the polishing arms 36 (ie., arm oscillation length.)

As stated above, it is important that manipulation of the arm oscillation length not substantially impact the mean polish rate (i.e., it is desirable for the input variable to control surface non-uniformity without substantially affecting the mean thickness of the polished layer.) Those skilled in the art will appreciate that mean polish rate ##EQU1##

Referring to FIG. 6, an exemplary system 72 for controlling the polishing tool 20 is shown. The exemplary system 72 includes a first and second metrology tool 76, 80 for measuring pre-polish thickness and post-polish thickness of process layers (e.g., dielectric layers, metal layers, etc.), respectively. Those skilled in the art will appreciate that although two metrology tools 76, 80 are shown, a single metrology tool may be used to perform both pre-polish and post-polish thickness measurements. The two metrology tools 76, 80 may be coupled to the polishing tool 20, and a suitable metrology tool 76, 80 for many applications is the Optiprobe.RTM. metrology tool manufactured by Therma-Wave, Inc. The system further includes a controller 84 coupled to the polishing tool 20. The controller 84 may receive pre-polish and post-polish thickness measurements from the metrology tools 76, 80, which may be used to control the polishing tool 20. Moreover, the controller 84 may be implemented using a variety of software applications. For example, the controller may be a model predictive controller implemented using MatLab Optimization Toolbox.RTM. routines.

At block 100, a first measurement may be made of the wafer layer thickness to determine the pre-polish surface non-uniformity of the wafer. As was

illustrated above, the pre-polish thickness of a process layer may be compared with the post-polish thickness the process layer to determine the state of the polishing process (e.g., center-fast, center-slow, etc.) For example, in one embodiment, the control variable is polish rate slope, and the polish rate slope is determined by measuring the pre-polish and post-polish thickness of the process layer at a plurality of radial points. In one embodiment, the thickness of the process layer is measured using an ellipsometer at 9 radial sites and a best-fit line is used to determine the pre-polish surface non-uniformity of the process layer.

Referring back to FIG. 7, the first lot of wafers is polished, at block 124. Once the first lot of wafers is polished, at block 128, a second measurement of the process layer thickness may be made to determine the polishing state of the polishing tool 20. As described above, rather than measuring each wafer in the first lot, a representative group of wafers may be measured from the first lot, and the control variable for the first lot may be determined from the measurements of the representative group. For example, in one embodiment, a lot of wafers is comprised of 25 wafers, and a representative group from the lot is comprised of 5 wafers. To determine the state of the polishing tool 20, the second measurement (e.g., post-polish thickness of the process layer) may be compared with the first measurement (eg., pre-polish thickness of the process layer), and in one embodiment, the polish rate slope of the process layer may be determined.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein the control variable is polish rate slope, and the polish rate slope is determined by measuring a

pre-polish and a
post-polish thickness of the process layer of the first lot
of wafers at a
plurality of radial positions and comparing the pre-polish
measurements with
the post-polish measurements at substantially the same
radial positions.

US-PAT-NO: 6213846

DOCUMENT-IDENTIFIER: US 6213846 B1

TITLE: Real-time control of chemical-mechanical polishing processes using a shaft distortion measurement

----- KWIC -----

In film removal processes, it is extremely important to stop the process when the correct film thickness has been removed (that is, when the endpoint has been reached). In a typical CMP process, a film is selectively removed from a semiconductor wafer by rotating the wafer against a polishing pad (or moving the pad against the wafer, or both) with a controlled amount of pressure in the presence of a slurry. Overpolishing (removing too much) of a film renders the wafer unusable for further processing, thereby resulting in yield loss. Underpolishing (removing too little) of the film requires that the CMP process be repeated, which is tedious and costly. Underpolishing may sometimes go unnoticed, which also results in yield loss.

In a number of CMP processes, it is necessary to measure the thickness of the layer to be removed and the polishing rate for each wafer, in order to determine a desired polishing time. The CMP process is simply run for this length of time, and then stopped. Since many different factors influence the polishing rate, and the polishing rate itself can change during a process, this approach is far from satisfactory.

US-PAT-NO: 5948205

DOCUMENT-IDENTIFIER: US 5948205 A

TITLE: Polishing apparatus and method for planarizing
layer on a semiconductor
wafer

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In an attempt to bring the rate of polishing the test piece closer to the actual rate of polishing devices on the manufacturing line, more than one and preferably a considerably large number of test pieces are used to determine an optimum polishing rate. Such a measure, however, entails an increase in the manufacturing cost due to a higher material cost for test pieces and a reduction in the operating hours of the manufacturing facilities, making it even more impractical.

By utilizing this relationship, it is now possible to measure the friction caused between the layer being polished and a turntable carrying a polishing slurry during the polishing operation, determine the rate of polishing the layer from the measured friction, determine the extent of polishing of the layer by integrating the polishing rate with time and terminate the polishing operation upon coincidence of the extent of polishing of the layer and a predetermined value. Therefore, it is possible to provide a method of easily and accurately controlling the extent to which the device is polished.

US-PAT-NO: 5830041

DOCUMENT-IDENTIFIER: US 5830041 A

TITLE: Method and apparatus for determining endpoint during a polishing process

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The electric current of the first motor 6 is detected by the first motor current detector 8, and the detected electric current signal is sent to the signal processing device 10. In the signal processing device 10, the electric current signal is processed to eliminate noise and further to determine the reference time when the uneven surface is polished to a flat surface, and the polishing time from the reference time is calculated on the basis of the polishing rate which has been input to the signal processing device 10. The signal processing device 10 sends an endpoint signal to the controller 11 when the calculated polishing time has elapsed, and the controller 11 stops the polishing process of the polishing apparatus.